

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A-21NEW YORK TIMES  
19 July 1983

# For Covert Action . . .

By Don Ritter

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives will soon be considering a bill amending the Intelligence Authorization Act for fiscal year 1983 that would cut off funds for any covert or overt United States support for the contras, or counterrevolutionaries, fighting against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. This vote will be one of the most important in this Congress, and if it goes the wrong way it could legitimize the "Brezhnev Doctrine" here in our hemisphere.

The Soviet policy now commonly known as the Brezhnev Doctrine means that the Soviet Union is prepared to do whatever is necessary to keep its sister socialist states from leaving the family. On its own borders, whether it's Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland or Afghanistan, the Soviet Union holds most of the cards. But enforcing the Brezhnev Doctrine in Africa or Latin America presents them with other problems.

On this side of the world, in the

## U.S. help vital to Nicaraguan contras

Western Hemisphere, the United States has the home-court advantage. One would think the Monroe Doctrine — outlined by President James Monroe in a speech to Congress on Dec. 2, 1823 — would hold sway. The United States, according to the Monroe Doctrine, would prevent the big autocratic European powers of the time — including, ironically, Russia — from imposing their tyranny on the newly independent and still weak Latin American countries.

The Monroe Doctrine served as the cornerstone of United States relations with powerful European adversaries in Latin America for nearly a century and a half. But today the Soviet Union, by its actions in Cuba and through Cuba in Central and South America, is challenging our historic guarantee to protect Western Hemisphere nations against European interference "for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny."

*Don Ritter, a Republican Representative from Pennsylvania, speaks Spanish and Russian and has traveled widely in Latin America and lived for a year in the Soviet Union.*

If the essence of the Brezhnev Doctrine is to prohibit nations in the Soviet sphere of influence from escaping superpower domination, the essence of the Monroe Doctrine is to prevent superpowers from subjugating less powerful countries. The differences between the two doctrines are central to the way we as a nation approach the most critical part of Central America today, Nicaragua.

Recent decisions by two Democratic-controlled House committees, the House Select Committee on Intelligence and the Foreign Affairs Committee, endorsed legislative language known as the Boland-Zablocki bill. This has remarkable implications.

Boland-Zablocki, in essence, supports the Brezhnev Doctrine and refutes the Monroe Doctrine, turning history upside down in our own backyard. Boland-Zablocki, by cutting off all our support, covert or overt, to those fighting the Cuban-Soviet sister regime in Nicaragua, makes the United States the enforcer of the Brezhnev Doctrine. We, not the Soviet Union, would serve as the ultimate constraint on those fighting for greater freedom for Nicaragua.

"Socialist" Nicaragua is the arms depot, the nerve center, the training ground for the Soviet-Cuban backed "revolution without frontiers," to quote the Sandinista leadership itself. Yet, if Boland-Zablocki becomes law, it is the Americans who will prevent Nicaragua from reverting from Soviet-style socialism, the Americans who will be pulling the rug from under those we have supported. If Boland-Zablocki becomes law, we Americans will be the chief carriers of Brezhnev's legacy in the Western Hemisphere as his heirs move closer and closer to East-Europeanizing our southern border. While Americans of another era could take pride in making the world safe for democracy, a newer breed could claim credit for making the new world safe for Communism.

To those who seek to undercut Nicaraguan opposition to the Marxist Nicaraguan regime, the resolute commitment to freedom and our hemispheric interests embodied in the Monroe Doctrine are obsolete. Well, a fair number of House members just don't believe that for a moment, so the battle over Boland-Zablocki in the full House is going to be very different than it was in committee. Party lines, strong during the contest in committee, will blur on the floor. I predict there are just not enough Democrats in the House who will vote for Leonid Brezhnev over James Monroe.